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## The Penkovsky Trial

So often has the Kremlin cried "wolf" in agitating its people with warnings of peril that the true beast is recognized as such only belatedly and with surprise. To take the Soviets at their word, Col. Oleg Penkovsky, the middle-level scientific bureaucrat now on trial for high treason is a real wolf. By the elaborate and lurid record unfolding at his show trial in Moscow, Penkovsky passed to Western intelligence agencies about 5000 photographs of "extremely secret (documents) of an economic, political and military character." For more than a year his operations went undetected by a Soviet security network of justly vaunted scope.

Think of it: five thousand items of "extremely secret information." If the story being told is true—and it is hard to see why the Soviets would exaggerate their losses—Penkovsky must be credited with being a remarkably successful agent, even more clever than the highly regarded Col. Abel and far more valuable than the various Soviet detectors who have surfaced over the years. Through his personal talents and his high professional and social connections, he apparently was able to tap circles and secrets of an exalted order.

The high-level connections which seem to have facilitated his alleged espionage also account for the hints that his case is being used as a political football in the Kremlin. So far the trial has produced nothing to substantiate these hints but the political repercussions, if any, would more likely crop up in the private council of the Kremlin than under the blinding lights of the courtroom. The foreign offices of the West will also be looking to see if the trial signals any important changes in Soviet policy. On past experience, it could be unlikely for Russian leadership to admit that such a counter-intelligence production for high treason. At the very least, the trial is a dramatic warning to the West to remain alert.